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SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Dallas, Texas

Technical information: (972) 850-4800 BLSInfoDallas@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/southwest

Media contact: (972) 850-4800

County Employment and Wages in Arkansas – Fourth Quarter 2013

Employment increased in the three largest Arkansas counties from December 2012 to December 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are those with 2012 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that Benton County had the largest increase, up 2.1 percent, followed by Washington (0.6 percent) and Pulaski (0.1 percent). (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.8 percent from December 2012 to December 2013 as 292 of the 334 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Weld County, Colo., recorded the highest percentage increase in the country, up 6.0 percent over the year. St. Clair, Ill., registered the largest percentage employment decline, down 3.1 percent.

Among the three largest counties in Arkansas, employment was highest in Pulaski County (246,400) in December 2013. Benton and Washington Counties had employment levels of 100,800 and 95,200, respectively. Together, the three largest Arkansas counties accounted for 38.3 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013, Washington County recorded the fastest rate of increase in average weekly wages among the three large counties in Arkansas, registering a gain of 2.5 percent. (See [table 1](#).) Benton County recorded the highest average weekly wage among these large counties at \$913 per week. Nationally, the average weekly wage was unchanged from a year ago at \$1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 72 counties in Arkansas with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2013. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Washington County's 2.5-percent rise in average weekly wages from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the fourth quarter of 2013 ranked 29th among the nation's 334 largest counties. (See [table 1](#).) Advancing at a slower pace, wages in Benton increased 1.1 percent over the year, ranking 95th. In contrast, Pulaski County recorded a wage decrease of 3.1 percent.

Nationally, 185 of the 334 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Santa Cruz, Calif., had the largest wage gain, up 6.5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2012. Ada, Idaho, was second with a wage increase of 6.4 percent, followed by the counties of Washington, Ore. (5.9 percent), and Union, N.J. (5.2 percent).

Among the large U.S. counties, 140 experienced over-the-year wage decreases. Douglas, Colo., had the largest wage decrease with a loss of 29.7 percent. San Mateo, Calif., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, down 15.8 percent from the fourth quarter 2012, followed by Virginia Beach City, Va. (-10.0 percent), McHenry, Ill. (-8.8 percent), and Shawnee, Kan. (-5.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Weekly wages in the state's three large counties were below the national average of \$1,000 per week. However, average weekly wages in two of these counties were high enough to place near the middle of the national ranking. In the fourth quarter of 2013, Benton County's average wage (\$913) ranked 161st and Pulaski County (\$899) ranked 178th. In contrast, at \$857 per week, wages in Washington County placed in the bottom third among large U.S. counties, ranking 223rd overall.

Nationally, 98 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013. San Mateo, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,724. New York, N.Y., was second at \$2,041, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,972).

Seventy percent of the largest U.S. counties (235) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$587), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$598) and Hidalgo (\$620). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than a quarter of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, San Mateo, Calif.

Average weekly wages in Arkansas's smaller counties

All 72 of Arkansas's smaller counties – those with employment below 75,000 – reported weekly wages below the national average of \$1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2013. Among these counties, Calhoun (\$916) and Union (\$876) posted the highest weekly wages, while Newton reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state (\$472). (See [table 2](#).)

When all 75 counties in Arkansas were considered, 8 reported average weekly wages under \$550, 37 reported wages from \$550 to \$649, 18 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 7 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 5 averaged \$850 or more per week. (See [chart 1](#).) The higher-paying counties were located around the metropolitan areas of Fayetteville and Little Rock, and along the southern border of the state.

Additional statistics and other Information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit www.bls.gov/cew/.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2012 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2013 version of the news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2012* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn12.htm. The 2013 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2014.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.3 million employer reports covered 136.1 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 3 largest counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2013

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2012-13 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2012-13 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	136,129.4	1.8	--	\$1,000	--	0.0	--
Arkansas	1,154.3	-0.5	--	771	47	0.4	22
Benton, Ark.	100.8	2.1	118	913	161	1.1	95
Pulaski, Ark.	246.4	0.1	290	899	178	-3.1	323
Washington, Ark.	95.2	0.6	239	857	223	2.5	29

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2013

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	136,129,407	\$1,000
Arkansas	1,154,299	771
Arkansas	10,008	754
Ashley	7,264	767
Baxter	14,092	659
Benton	100,778	913
Boone	13,613	668
Bradley	3,419	597
Calhoun	2,669	916
Carroll	9,791	537
Chicot	3,329	579
Clark	9,391	614
Clay	3,623	565
Cleburne	6,798	597
Cleveland	1,078	561
Columbia	8,126	742
Conway	6,925	696
Craighead	45,733	716
Crawford	19,130	656
Crittenden	16,696	639
Cross	4,999	623
Dallas	2,712	556
Desha	4,577	643
Drew	6,503	601
Faulkner	40,528	805
Franklin	4,374	667
Fulton	1,946	541
Garland	35,414	655
Grant	3,855	669
Greene	14,829	670
Hempstead	7,858	626
Hot Spring	8,497	640
Howard	7,195	557
Independence	14,517	676
Izard	3,110	578
Jackson	5,167	660
Jefferson	28,549	749
Johnson	8,334	566
Lafayette	1,266	655
Lawrence	4,186	561
Lee	1,976	637
Lincoln	2,972	643
Little River	3,888	783
Logan	5,514	613
Lonoke	13,472	627
Madison	3,179	566
Marion	3,707	554
Miller	12,856	712
Mississippi	18,974	814
Monroe	2,191	578
Montgomery	1,352	508
Nevada	2,371	582
Newton	1,099	472
Ouachita	7,168	625
Perry	1,224	605

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2013 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2013	Average Weekly Wage ⁽¹⁾
Phillips	5,827	602
Pike	2,281	553
Poinsett	5,025	658
Polk	5,938	556
Pope	26,527	683
Prairie	1,538	638
Pulaski	246,435	899
Randolph	4,700	518
Saline	21,789	637
Scott	3,090	554
Searcy	1,598	494
Sebastian	64,804	771
Sevier	4,845	555
Sharp	3,616	507
St. Francis	7,880	620
Stone	2,442	494
Union	17,952	876
Van Buren	3,855	816
Washington	95,212	857
White	24,638	687
Woodruff	1,876	617
Yell	6,561	550

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2013

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2012-13	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2012-13	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	136,129.4	1.8	\$1,000	--	0.0	--
Alabama	1,866.5	1.0	851	34	-0.5	39
Alaska	315.1	0.0	1,022	14	1.6	7
Arizona	2,571.0	2.4	906	23	-0.5	39
Arkansas	1,154.3	-0.5	771	47	0.4	22
California	15,650.3	2.8	1,175	6	-0.9	43
Colorado	2,383.9	3.1	1,023	13	-0.9	43
Connecticut	1,661.2	0.3	1,238	4	-1.3	49
Delaware	419.6	1.8	1,035	9	-0.6	41
District of Columbia	727.3	0.6	1,638	1	-3.9	51
Florida	7,739.5	2.7	883	29	0.2	27
Georgia.....	3,986.9	2.5	924	21	-0.1	32
Hawaii.....	632.9	1.7	871	30	0.3	25
Idaho	634.5	2.6	754	50	3.0	2
Illinois	5,758.9	1.0	1,060	8	0.2	27
Indiana.....	2,896.9	1.6	814	40	-0.2	35
Iowa	1,510.9	1.4	834	38	1.6	7
Kansas	1,359.5	1.6	832	39	-0.4	38
Kentucky.....	1,818.0	1.2	804	42	0.2	27
Louisiana	1,911.6	0.9	889	26	0.5	20
Maine.....	586.8	0.8	786	46	1.7	5
Maryland.....	2,555.1	0.4	1,076	7	-0.9	43
Massachusetts	3,332.9	1.5	1,258	3	0.8	17
Michigan	4,072.4	2.0	952	20	-0.2	35
Minnesota.....	2,720.6	1.7	988	16	0.3	25
Mississippi.....	1,108.1	1.1	729	51	1.3	11
Missouri	2,670.4	1.1	861	32	-0.2	35
Montana	440.0	1.3	760	48	0.4	22
Nebraska	944.3	1.4	796	43	-0.1	32
Nevada	1,180.5	3.0	884	28	0.7	18
New Hampshire.....	629.3	1.4	1,017	15	-0.8	42
New Jersey.....	3,887.5	1.2	1,186	5	1.1	14
New Mexico	796.2	-0.1	814	40	1.4	10
New York	8,888.6	1.7	1,266	2	-1.1	48
North Carolina	4,045.5	1.9	860	33	0.7	18
North Dakota	435.0	3.3	980	17	3.8	1
Ohio	5,175.4	1.4	887	27	0.0	30
Oklahoma	1,581.3	0.6	851	34	-0.1	32
Oregon	1,699.6	2.5	894	25	2.6	3
Pennsylvania	5,650.3	0.4	976	18	0.4	22
Rhode Island	462.7	1.4	960	19	1.5	9
South Carolina.....	1,875.8	2.3	793	44	1.0	15
South Dakota.....	407.1	1.3	759	49	1.3	11
Tennessee	2,758.3	1.8	895	24	-0.9	43
Texas	11,246.3	2.6	1,027	12	0.0	30
Utah	1,284.7	3.1	836	37	-0.9	43
Vermont.....	308.5	0.6	848	36	2.3	4
Virginia.....	3,670.0	0.1	1,028	11	-1.3	49
Washington.....	2,976.0	2.5	1,034	10	1.7	5
West Virginia	710.1	-0.6	792	45	0.5	20
Wisconsin	2,751.8	1.0	865	31	1.2	13
Wyoming	279.2	0.6	917	22	1.0	15
Puerto Rico.....	958.3	-2.3	551	(3)	0.2	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	-3.6	754	(3)	2.4	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

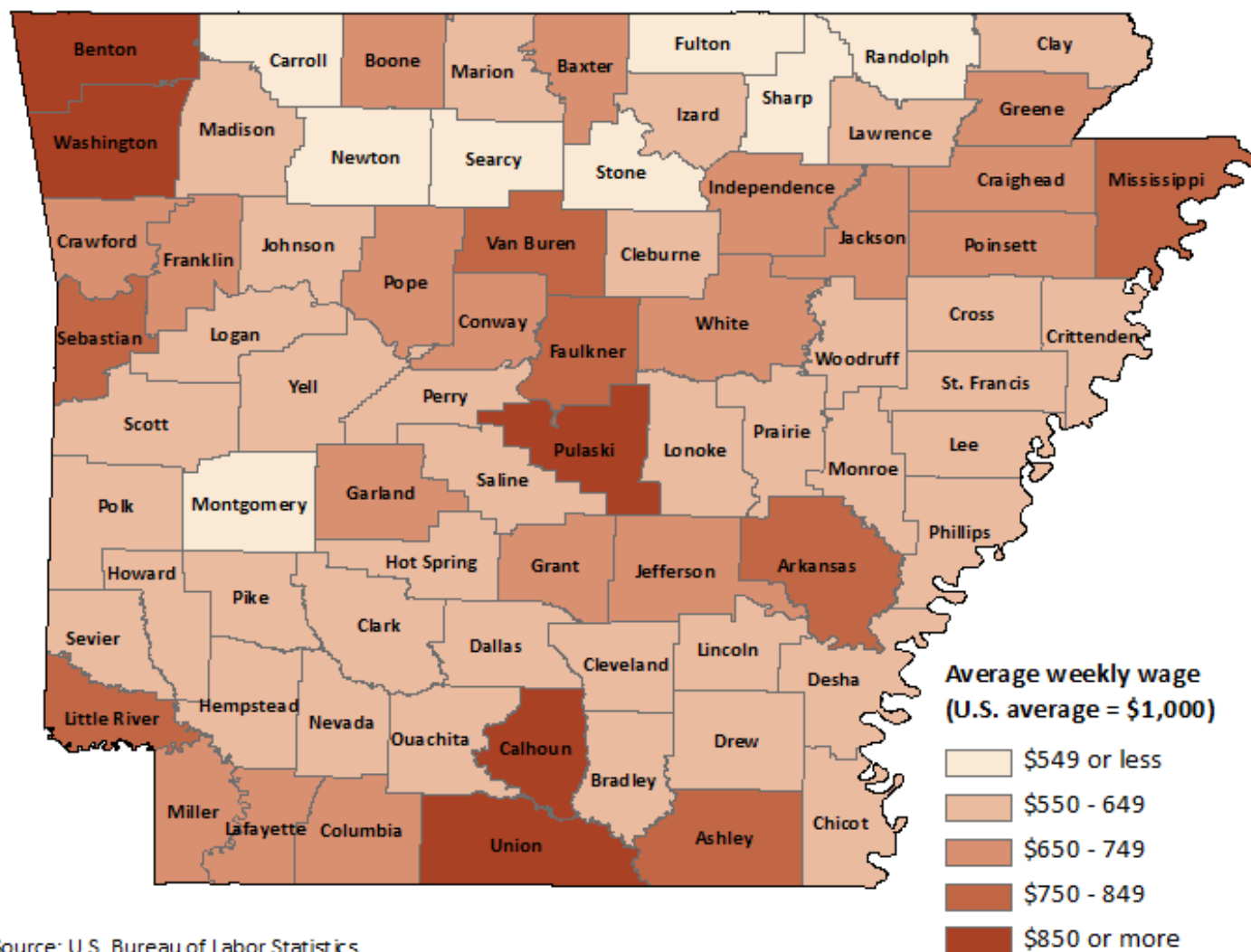
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

NOTE: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.